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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [SNAR](#) [ML](#)
SUBJECT: SIERRA LEONE FOREIGN MINISTER LAYS OUT AGENDAS FOR
THIRD COMMITTEE AND PRESIDENTIAL VISITS

REF: A. FREETOWN 453
[B](#). STATE 93981
[C](#). FREETOWN 336

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JUNE CARTER PERRY FOR REASON 1.4 B/D

[1](#). (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Zainab Hawa BANGURA met with Ambassador September 9th to discuss President Koroma's upcoming trip to Washington and New York for the United Nations General Assembly. Bangura expected Koroma to seek international assistance in three priority areas, Agriculture, Infrastructure, and Energy, and Koroma will also engage in outreach activities with Sierra Leoneans in the United States and meet with IFI and USG partners. Koroma and Sierra Leone can be expected to follow African Union policy on Third Committee resolutions in general, but may break ranks and support the U.S. voting against the resolution on the defamation of religion. Bangura also discussed counter-narcotics issues, and later reported that the President had agreed to attend an interagency briefing hosted by DEA on narcotics trafficking in West Africa. End Summary.

[2](#). (U) Foreign Minister Zainab Hawa BANGURA provided a schedule of President Koroma's upcoming trip to the United States (original scanned and sent to the desk), and his intention to promote his development priorities: Agriculture, Infrastructure, and Energy. Delegation members are provided by reftel A. Highlights of the visit include:

- September 21, Sunday
- President Koroma will arrive in New York, staying at the Waldorf Astoria
- Speak at Rutgers University
- September 22, Monday
- Meeting with Director of Foreign Assistance Henrietta Fore
- Reception hosted by President and Laura Bush
- September 23, Tuesday
- Visits to New Haven (sister city of Freetown; home port of the Amistad) and Southern Connecticut University
- September 24, Wednesday
- Meeting with Bill Clinton concerning the Clinton Global Initiative
- Meeting with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (proposed)
- September 25, Thursday
- Addresses General Assembly
- Meeting with George Soros
- September 26, Friday
- Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative
- Depart for Washington DC by train
- Check into the Willard InterContinental
- September 27, Saturday

--Meeting with Congressman Conyers (Congressional Black Caucus head) and Actor Isaiah Washington

--September 28, Sunday

--Various meetings with Sierra Leoneans in the US

--September 29, Monday

--Meeting with DEA, CIA, and Coast Guard (proposed)

--Meeting with IMF Director General

--Meeting with World Bank President

--Lunch with Corporate Council on Africa

--Meeting with Maurice Tempelsman, Chairman of the Board of Lazare Kaplan International

--Depart Washington for Accra

13. (U) Additional meetings, including with U/S Burns, are currently under consideration.

4, (C) In response to reftel B, FM Bangura indicated that Sierra Leone was in general agreement with U.S. Third Committee goals, and would support US efforts on resolutions on prisoners of conscience, freedom of expression, and defamation of religion. She proved very supportive of the United States' interest in opposing the resolution of defamation of religion, noting her position as a "Modern Muslim Woman" who had battled discrimination in the past.

15. (C) Bangura also appeared supportive of possible resolutions on Iran, Burma, DPRK, agreed that resolutions on the Sudan and Belarus were unhelpful at this time, and appeared to support the U.S. position against no action motions. Bangura indicated that a motion on Zimbabwe might not be productive at this time. (Embassy note: while Sierra

Leone seemed inclined not to support a resolution on Zimbabwe at this time, the Koroma government has broken with the AU in the past and joined in UK/U.S. condemnation of the Mugabe regime in the past, and might be persuaded to do so again. End note.).

16. (C) After completing discussions of the President's trip and the UNGA, Bangura dismissed members of her staff that had been attending the meeting and asked for an update on the possible U.S. indictment of Colombians and Venezuelans arrested in July (reftel C). It was suggested to Bangura that President Koroma meet with the DEA and other agencies in Washington to get a threat assessment and a way forward for addressing the increased risk to Sierra Leone posed by drug trafficking. Bangura later reported that the President had agreed to the meeting.

17. (C) Comment: As a country with a strong pro-Western foreign policy and a willingness to occasionally breach AU consensus, Sierra Leone could prove a valuable ally in the General Assembly Third Committee. Koroma's visit will also provide the USG an opportunity to deepen its relationship with a head of state determined to fight the influx of narcotics into West Africa. End Comment.

PERRY